because they appear again and again in literature, mythology, and religion, and partly because by some Chinese and Westerners the more prominent figures are seriously taken as actual personages. For example, the Yellow Emperor occupies a prominent place in Taoism, and at least one recent attempt has been made to begin Chinese chronology with his accession. It is just possible, moreover, that some of the stories will eventually be found to have a basis in actual fact. They must, therefore, be mentioned.

As is natural with myths, particularly when, like these, they have varying origins, differing accounts and attempts at chronology exist. Only the chief personages that appear in one or more Chinese histories deserve mention. P'an Ku is frequently described as separating the heavens and the earth, and as forming the sun, the moon, and plants and animals. There are, however, several versions of his myth. Following him some accounts say that there appeared twelve or thirteen Celestial Sovereigns *(Tien Huang),* all brothers, each of whom reigned 18,000 years, eleven Terrestrial Sovereigns *(Ti Huang),* again brothers, each of whom also ruled 18,000 years, and then nine Human Sovereigns *(Jen Huang),* once more brothers, who reigned a total of 45,600 years. We hear also of Yu Ch'ao, who is reputed to have taught men to build houses; of Sui Jen, who is said to have devised a way of producing fire by boring one piece of wood with another; of Fu Hsi, who is reported to have taught his people to fish with nets and rear domestic animals, to have devised musical instruments, to have substituted for writing by knots in strings the pictograms and ideograms which form the basis of the present

system of characters, and to have invented the eight trigrams—pa kua—later used in divination. To Nil Kua—often associated closely with Fu Hsi—is attributed the regulation of marriage. Shen Nung, the "Divine Husbandman/' is reported to have taught the people agriculture and to have been the father of medicine.

Huang Ti (the Yellow Emperor) is credited with fighting successfully against the barbarians, with instituting the system of official historiographers, with inventing bricks for building purposes, with erecting an observatory, with correcting the calendar by adding an intercalary month, and with introducing the chronological system of reckoning by cycles of sixty years. He is also reported to have built a temple to Heaven, to have regulated the